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CHAPTER III. FIELD ORGANIZATION

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This chapter describes the organization of UNICEF field offices. Section A provides an overview of UNICEF field offices. Section B describes the current functions and programming responsibilities of the regional office and the responsibilities of the regional director. Section C describes the current functions and programming responsibilities of the area and country offices and the responsibilities of the representative. Section D describes the current functions and responsibilities of the sub-office. Section E describes the current functions of the outposting.

III. FIELD ORGANIZATION

A. Overview

One fifth of UNICEF staff are assigned to its headquarters locations in New York, Geneva and Copenhagen, as well as Sydney and Tokyo. The remaining four fifths of UNICEF staff work in field offices where the delivery of UNICEF programme cooperation takes place.

UNICEF field offices are diverse in terms of structure, methods of operation and staffing, depending primarily upon the needs of the countries which the office serves. UNICEF distinguishes five types of field offices as follows:

(a) Regional offices, numbering six, which support area or country offices within a geographic region. These offices are headed by UNICEF regional directors;

(b) Area or country offices, numbering 78, which programme human and material resources for the benefit of children and women in the countries served. These offices are headed by UNICEF representatives;

(c) National sub-offices, numbering 13, are located in countries where UNICEF programme inputs are significant enough to require a full-time presence, but are not of sufficient size to warrant a full-scale country office. Sub-offices are headed by assistant UNICEF representatives, who report to UNICEF representatives in the area offices described above;

(d) Zonal or provincial sub-offices in large countries, of which there are 13, manage UNICEF cooperation in a number of provinces or States;

(e) Outpostings, of which there are currently 100. These are small, usually remote, project-related offices or locations.

All staff in UNICEF field offices are directly responsible to the UNICEF head of office in their country of assignment. In addition, many field-based staff maintain functional relationships with their technical or professional counterparts in specific divisions at headquarters and in regional offices. For example, the supply officer in a UNICEF country office will maintain close links with the UNICEF regional supply officer as well as with Supply Division staff at Copenhagen and in New York.

B. The regional office

General functions

Regional offices provide technical advisory services and some operational support to country offices through specialist Professional staff and interdisciplinary resources. These help to: (a) monitor and observe the situation of children and women in the region as it emerges or changes; (b) provide high quality support services to, as well as monitor the programme

performance of, the field offices in the region; (c) provide relevant information and advice to headquarters on major policy issues; and (d) provide a regional basis for representing the Executive Director. The regional office is headed by a regional director who reports to the Executive Director of UNICEF.

Responsibilities of the UNICEF regional director

The regional director, as a senior colleague, advises and assists the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Directors on matters relating to global policy formulation and implementation, under the broad policy guidelines laid down by the Executive Board; represents the Executive Director vis-à-vis institutions of a regional character within and outside the United Nations system; and provides guidance to and coordinates the work of UNICEF representatives in the region.

The regional director is responsible for directing the regional office and its staff and, in addition, is the first reporting officer for the performance evaluation of all representatives; assuring smooth transitions when a new representative is appointed to a country within the region; and assuring management coordination in the region through individual communication with the representatives and as the head of the region's team of representatives.

In the latter capacity, regional directors are senior professional colleagues in relation to UNICEF representatives and their staff in area/country offices. As such, they provide team leadership on regional management issues, supervision on major matters and advice, support, or technical services as required by the field offices.

Support to programming in the region

While direct responsibility for programming UNICEF assistance rests with the UNICEF representative in the area or country office, the regional office has a major supporting role to play in providing technical and operational assistance to country programmes. The regional director and the relevant regional advisers provide support and guidance to those offices which need assistance in developing or improving systems to manage programme implementation.

It is the responsibility of the regional director and other senior regional advisers to be familiar with conditions in each office that either facilitate or impede programme preparation and implementation and to provide country offices and headquarters with advice and assistance on overcoming any weaknesses.

The regional director also has major external relations responsibilities, which include advocating the cause of children and women and UNICEF policies and strategies, especially in regional and subregional forums; collecting and disseminating information on UNICEF-assisted programmes; fund-raising; and maintaining relations with regional bodies and organizations.

In carrying out the above functions, the regional director is assisted by regional advisory and operational staff who are posted in the region in response to the requirements of the area/country offices and their felt needs. The regional director is responsible for managing this regional resource group

through appropriate work plans that meet the needs of field offices in the region.

The above activities have a regional perspective for which the regional director is directly responsible, and a country-level dimension for which the regional office plays a supporting role. In carrying out these functions, the regional office coordinates with appropriate offices at headquarters, seeking their advice and keeping them informed as necessary.

C. The area and country offices

General functions

Each UNICEF area office and each UNICEF country office is headed by a UNICEF representative. The designation "area office" refers to an office which serves more than one country.

Area/country offices are responsible for programming human and material resources within the basic UNICEF priorities and guidelines as set out in the medium-term plan and as they apply to the needs and situation of children and women in the countries served. To achieve this, UNICEF country programming procedures are followed in the preparation of a situation analysis of the needs of children and women and of a multi-year programme of UNICEF support to help strengthen national actions to meet them.

As the head of the area or country office, the UNICEF representative is appointed by, and accountable to, the Executive Director. The representative is responsible for the overall performance of UNICEF in a given country or area, including the management of the UNICEF office(s) and the programme of cooperation with the countries served.

The UNICEF representative is responsible for recognizing when the office needs assistance from the regional office or headquarters and seeking it, for consulting with the regional director and senior headquarters staff on major matters and for signalling to them where the office may have difficulty in meeting the accepted organization standards or in achieving corporate goals and proposing remedial action.

Responsibilities of the UNICEF representative

The UNICEF representative is responsible for the management of the area/country office and any sub-offices reporting to it in the area of programme, administration, finance/accounting and supply/logistics. Such sub-offices may include national sub-offices located in neighbouring countries or provincial/state sub-offices located within the country where the UNICEF representative resides. The representative is accountable for the application of UNICEF policies and procedures in the use of UNICEF organizational resources, human, financial and otherwise.

The representative prepares a work plan for the accomplishment of area/country office tasks and prepares budget requests to support the work plan

and a staff development plan for all the staff under the representative's responsibility.

The representative is responsible for the implementation of Executive Board policies and decisions for the countries served by the office. By advocacy and other means, the UNICEF representative and staff encourage assisted countries to expand and improve services for children, particularly ensuring their survival, protection and development.

In each country, the representative and staff participate with counterparts from government ministries in analysing and planning for the well-being of children as part of the countries' national development efforts. The representative advocates those elements of UNICEF global programmatic strategies that are particularly applicable to the countries being served.

The representative is responsible for all aspects of UNICEF support to the country programming process as indicated below. After such programme cooperation enters into effect, the representative and staff assist the Government in the implementation of the programme and report thereon to the regional office and to headquarters. Those programming tasks are done in collaboration with the United Nations resident coordinator and representatives of relevant agencies of the United Nations system and, where appropriate, representatives of bilateral aid agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Programming responsibilities of the area and country offices

In consonance with the UNICEF global advocacy strategy of encouraging Governments and communities to undertake measures which directly affect child survival, protection and development and the well-being of women, all field staff members have a responsibility to work towards the building of alliances at the national level with potential partners, governmental or non-governmental, which help to facilitate the achievement of a better life for children and the involvement of all sectors of society in this undertaking.

In furthering the objectives of child survival, protection and development in the broadest sense, the UNICEF representative and staff deliver programme assistance to the countries served by the country office. The official framework for planning and implementing such assistance is the country programming process.

The country programming process includes stages of analysis, programme strategy formulation, programme development leading to the preparation of formal documentation containing the country programme recommendations and various preview and review procedures. The outcome of the process is the country programme - a product of the situation analysis of children and women, past experience of programme performance, national plans and priorities and corporate priorities of UNICEF as set out from time to time. The culmination of these efforts is the approval of a country programme of cooperation by the UNICEF Executive Board; the UNICEF representative and the office team are then responsible for assisting the Government in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Such programme implementation requires signing a plan of operations as the formal agreement between UNICEF and the Government, after which plans of action for specific projects are developed. During the life of these projects, area and country office staff call forward supplies and equipment, arrange for the payment of training stipends or other forms of cash assistance and arrange for expertise to be made available (either in the form of UNICEF technical project staff or by means of short-term consultants). All of these activities are carried out in collaboration with the Government and in support of the national programme.

The representative is also responsible for the implementation of programmes that are funded from regional or global allocations, in order to accelerate achievement of certain priority goals or to introduce innovations in certain aspects of the country programme. These activities are carried out as an integral part of the country programmes.

Other responsibilities of the area and country offices

The representative is responsible for personnel administration in the office and in the sub-offices reporting to it. With regard to international staff, the representative provides advice to the Appointment and Placement Committees and the Division of Personnel on proposed movements of staff into and out of the countries for which the representative is responsible.

The representative and other senior staff in the office have a responsibility to foster good management/staff relations. The supervisory function is carried out with a view to developing a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. Staff meetings at all levels are held on a regular basis. Information is shared and circulated as widely as possible, consistent with efficiency considerations. Staff are encouraged to participate in decisions affecting them and their work. Attention is paid to the general welfare of UNICEF staff and their families.

The UNICEF representative also has major external relations responsibilities. These include advocacy, particularly with host country Governments and their officials, as part of the overall programming strategy in the country; information collection for situation analyses and other purposes; management of press relations; fund-raising (including special events) with donor Governments and their local representatives; overall management of the UNICEF relationship with the host country Government in the capacity of representative of the Executive Director; and facilitation of marketing of UNICEF greeting cards in the countries served.

In the fulfilment of all of the above responsibilities, the UNICEF representative is supported by the regional director, colleagues in the regional office and the appropriate headquarters divisions.

D. The sub-office

A sub-office is a UNICEF office location where there is no regional director or representative present. There are two types of sub-offices: (a) the provincial/state sub-office (sometimes called the zone office), which is

located within the same country where there is a UNICEF representative's office; and (b) the national sub-office, which is the sole UNICEF presence in a country.

A provincial/state sub-office exists primarily to assist the Government of the country in its implementation responsibilities, or in programming at sub-national levels in relatively large countries where UNICEF cooperation is sufficiently sizeable or multi-faceted. Thus, in any specific country, a UNICEF sub-office may be located in the capital of the province, region or state. The distinguishing factor is that UNICEF sub-offices are located at sub-national administrative levels of the Government. The size of the sub-office varies, depending on the role assigned to it.

In contrast, national sub-offices are normally located in the capital of the country concerned and are the main physical presence of UNICEF in that country. National sub-offices vary in size, depending primarily on the planned expenditure level for the country, the funded level of projects for supplementary funding and the degree of difficulty of the programming environment.

National sub-offices report to a UNICEF area office. The head of a national sub-office, an assistant UNICEF representative, reports to the UNICEF representative concerned. The UNICEF representative is the accredited UNICEF official in a given country and is responsible to the Executive Director of UNICEF for all activities in that country.

The degree of programme planning responsibility assigned to the national sub-office depends on the respective capacities of the area office and the sub-office concerned. However, in nearly every case, the national sub-office functions as a programme implementation arm of the area office for the country assisted. Such implementation responsibilities would normally include liaison with government ministries, the United Nations Development Programme office and offices of other United Nations agencies and bilateral aid agencies; field observation and monitoring of UNICEF-assisted programmes; assistance in clearing, warehousing and distributing UNICEF supplies; and assistance in payment of cash assistance to UNICEF-supported programmes. Larger national sub-offices are assigned greater responsibilities including, for example, the calling forward of supply and cash assistance as required, or arranging for implementation reviews at the country level.

The degree of operational autonomy granted to a national sub-office is a decision taken by the UNICEF representative.

E. The outposting

An outposting is a small project location or office, usually in a remote field location of a country. It has a small number of staff - sometimes only one - such as a project or liaison officer. An outposting can be upgraded to a sub-office if its workload or staff increases, depending on the programme throughput of that particular country programme.